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SUBJECT: DR CONGO QUARTERLY REFUGEE REPORT, OCTOBER 2008

REF: STATE 116613

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Recent fighting between the CNDP and FARDC has displaced an estimated 250,000 IDP's since the end of August. Approximately 10,000 Congolese have crossed into Uganda over the last several weeks. UNHCR staff has just resumed operations in and around Goma. LRA activity has recently displaced an estimated 25,000 people in Dungu Territory. UNHCR reports the repatriation of over 27,000 Congolese as of September 2008. It also reports a net reduction of over 22,000 Congolese refugees in neighboring countries as repatriations have increased over the last quarter. There has been a net outflow of over 18,000 refugees from neighboring countries that were living in the DRC and that have returned home over the last quarter. Repatriation of Congolese from Tanzania, Zambia, and Republic of Congo continue at a steady pace. Complete repatriation of refugees and the return home of IDP's will not occur until the security situation in Eastern DRC is resolved. End Summary.

250,000 New IDP's in North Kivu  
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¶2. (U) The outbreak of new fighting between the CNDP and the FARDC in North Kivu has displaced an estimated 250,000 IDP's since August 28, according to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A UNHCR external relations officer told post October 31 that the current IDP situation was very fluid, but that the current estimate was over 1 million IDP's in North Kivu Province. UNHCR confirmed that there were likely over 1.5 million IDP's currently in the DRC.

¶3. (U) UNHCR officer confirmed that a few thousand Congolese have recently crossed over the border into Uganda, through Busanza, to escape the recent fighting. According to UNHCR, there are now over 10,000 new Congolese refugees in Uganda, 2,000 of which UNHCR has helped to relocate to an IDP camp in Nakivale.

¶4. (SBU) UNHCR Country Representative Eusebe Hounsokou told us November 3, that UNHCR has reopened its Goma office and has resumed operations in and around Goma. During the increased fighting around Goma the week of October 27, UNHCR staff was grouped at the MONUC HQ compound and at WFP. A UNHCR field team traveled to Rutshuru November 3 to investigate reports that the CNDP forced IDP's to go home by burning the Dumez, Kasasa, and Nyongera IDP camps. UNHCR confirmed November 4 that CNDP forces indeed emptied and burned the camps.

Refugees Displaced by the LRA  
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¶5. (SBU) The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) activities in Dungu Territory, Orientale Province have continued to terrorize local citizens and have forced thousands to flee their homes. Radio Okapi reports that recent LRA and FARDC clashes on November 1 left one civilian dead and a dozen women and children kidnapped by the LRA in

the city of Dungu, spreading mass panic and evacuation of the city. UNHCR Representative told us November 4 that the UNHCR is no longer operating in the territory due to security concerns. On October 19, the LRA attacked the village of Bangadi leaving six people dead. MONUC reported on October 10 that the LRA had killed more than 50 people and kidnapped more than 150 children over the last month. It estimated that there are currently over 25,000 IDP's in the territory, with at least 10,000 temporarily located in the village of Ngilima. UNHCR estimated that as of October 7, 5,000 Congolese refugees fleeing the LRA had arrived in Yambio, Southern Sudan. However, Hounsokou said that the original estimate has undoubtedly grown following the recent attacks on the city of Dungu.

#### Return of Congolese Refugees to the DRC

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¶6. (U) As of September 30, UNHCR had assisted 10,717 Congolese refugees to return to Equateur province, 9,435 to South Kivu province, 6,773 to Katanga province, and 299 to other areas in the DRC during the year. There are no estimates available of non-assisted returns during the year.

#### DRC Refugees in Other African Countries

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¶7. (U) UNHCR estimates 316,647 Congolese refugees are currently in other African countries. Over the last quarter, this estimate has shrunk by around 22,000 as more Congolese have returned home from neighboring countries. Tanzania still has the largest share with an estimated 82,921. Zambia hosts 50,128, Rwanda 54,583, Uganda 39,950, Burundi 22,135, Republic of Congo 15,441, and Central

KINSHASA 00000971 002 OF 002

African Republic 1,325. An additional 50,164 are located in other countries.

#### Refugees Hosted by the DRC

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¶8. (U) According to UNHCR estimates, as of September 15, the DRC hosted 158,578 refugees from other countries, a reduction of 18,000 from the previous quarter. The largest number was from Angola with an estimated 112,713. 24,854 originate from Rwanda, 17,602 from Burundi, 2,511 from Sudan, 782 from Republic of Congo, 40 from Central African Republic, 15 from Uganda, and 61 from other countries.

#### Repatriation from Zambia

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¶9. (SBU) UNHCR reported that the repatriation of Congolese refugees in Zambia back to Pweto, Moba, and Kalemie, in Katanga Province continues as planned with one to two convoys arriving each week. Through October 20, UNHCR reported that during 2008, it has facilitated the return of 8,615 Congolese from Zambia via this route. UNHCR Deputy Representative Victoria Akyeampong told us November 4 that they plan to suspend activities December 15 because of the rainy season. They plan to resume operations next spring.

#### Repatriation from Tanzania

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¶10. (U) Repatriation of Congolese refugees from Tanzania has recently resumed. Currently, two convoys are arriving each week to Uvira and Baraka in South Kivu Province. During 2008, UNHCR has repatriated 11,569 Congolese refugees in Tanzania to the DRC via Uvira and Baraka.

#### Repatriation from Republic of Congo

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¶11. (SBU) UNHCR has effectively reached its 2008 goal of repatriating 12,000 Congolese from the Republic of Congo, with the repatriation of 11,569 people through October 20. UNHCR reports that virtually all of the returning refugees have chosen to return to Equateur Province. The UNHCR Deputy Representative told us that

the repatriation phase will terminate at the end of the year as the reinsertion and livelihoods phase begins.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: The recent military offensives and counter-offensives by the CNDP and FARDC have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in North Kivu. Recent attacks, kidnappings, and terror by the LRA in northeastern DRC have caused a new humanitarian crisis by causing significant IDP and refugee flows within Dungu Territory and to Southern Sudan. However, in other parts of the DRC, repatriation programs from Tanzania and Zambia appear to be proceeding. Complete repatriation of refugees and the return home of IDP's will not occur until the security situation in the east is finally resolved.

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